



Real Possibilities

**Testimony of Pat Gerckens, AARP Volunteer on  
Human Services Budget  
Appropriations Committee**

**February 27, 2015**

GOOD EVENING, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. MY NAME IS PAT GERCKENS. I AM A LONG-TIME AARP VOLUNTEER FROM DERBY AND, AN ACTIVE AND INVOLVED MEMBER OF MY COMMUNITY. MY REASONS FOR THIS TESTIMONY ARE ALSO SLIGHTLY SELFISH AS I MAY BE IN NEED OF SOME OF THESE HOME CARE SERVICES SOONER THAN YOU ALL.

I LOVE GIVING BACK AS A VOLUNTEER WITH AARP AND SEVERAL OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT I BELONG TO (INCLUDING ONE OF MY FAVORITES, THE GAELIC AMERICAN CLUB IN FAIRFIELD). I AM A PROUD GRANDMOTHER OF FIVE AND SO FAR, I ENJOY MY SENIOR STATUS AND HOPE THAT THIS CONTINUES.

I AM 77 AND AS I GET OLDER, I MAY NEED SOME EXTRA HELP TAKING CARE OF MY HEALTH AND BASIC TASKS AROUND THE HOUSE BUT!!! THAT DOESN'T MEAN I WANT TO GIVE UP MY INDEPENDENCE OR THE THINGS I LOVE. I AM NOT ALONE IN MY THINKING; AS MOST SENIORS PREFER TO AGE IN THEIR OWN HOME FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

THAT'S WHY AARP ADVOCATES FOR SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY THAT GIVE FOLKS THE CHOICE TO AGE IN THE PLACE THEY CALL HOME WHERE THEY CAN STILL BE INVOLVED IN THEIR COMMUNITY. PERSONALLY, I HAVE FOUND THAT SENIORS WHO KEEP BUSY AND GET OFF THEIR ROCKERS HAVE A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE AND STAY HEALTHIER LONGER. UNFORTUNATELY, GOVERNOR MALLOY'S BUDGET PROPOSALS MAKES DANGEROUS CUTS TO HOME CARE SERVICES THAT WILL JEOPARDIZE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THOUSANDS OF SENIORS IN OUR STATE.

HIS BUDGET WOULD DOUBLE THE COST OF HOME CARE FOR SENIORS ON THE STATE-FUNDED CT HOME CARE PROGRAM, CUT OFF CERTAIN SERVICES FOR SENIORS HOPING TO AVOID NURSING HOME PLACEMENT AND SLASH FUNDING FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS WHO TAKE CARE OF A LOVED ONE WITH

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE. TOGETHER THESE CUTS WILL MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR SENIORS TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY AT HOME—WHERE THEY WANT TO BE.

AARP BELIEVES THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOME TO RECEIVE THE CARE THEY NEED. I ASK YOU TO PLEASE REJECT THE GOVERNOR'S CUTS TO THE CT HOME CARE PROGRAM AND RESTORE FUNDING FOR THE ALZHEIMER'S RESPITE CARE PROGRAM.

LET'S GIVE PEOPLE THE POWER TO CHOOSE WHERE THEY WANT TO RECEIVE THEIR CARE. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.